

## CLAIMS

We claim:

1. A licensing method for an electronic file between a server, a first client, and a second client, comprising the steps of:
  - (1) requesting a license from the server, transferring a first license to the first client, and allowing a first set of licensed actions with the electronic file based on the first license; and
  - (2) upon the occurrence of an event, requesting a license from the server and modifying the first license.
2. The licensing method of Claim 1, further comprising the step of:
  - (o) requesting the electronic file, transferring the electronic file to the first client, and allowing an initial set of permissible actions with the electronic file.
3. The licensing method of Claim 2, wherein the electronic file includes data selected from the group consisting of: document data, audio data, image data, and video data.
4. The licensing method of Claim 2, wherein the electronic file includes software selected from the group consisting of: application software and operating system software.
5. The licensing method of Claim 2, wherein step (o) further includes allowing an initial set of permissible actions with the electronic file regardless of a connection between the first client and the server.
6. The licensing method of Claim 5, wherein the first set of licensed actions is less restrictive than the initial set of permissible actions.

7. The licensing method of Claim 2, wherein step (1) further includes requesting a license from the server upon the receipt of the electronic file.
8. The licensing method of Claim 1, wherein step (1) further includes receiving a license request from the first client.
9. The licensing method of Claim 8, wherein step (1) further includes generating a first license based on an attribute of the first client.
10. The licensing method of Claim 9, wherein the attribute is a machine identification of the first client.
11. The licensing method of Claim 9, wherein the attribute is a user identification of the first client.
12. The licensing method of Claim 1, wherein step (1) further includes allowing a first set of licensed actions regardless of a connection between the first client and the server.
13. The licensing method of Claim 1, wherein the event is a transfer of the file from the first client to the second client.
14. The licensing method of Claim 13, wherein step (2) further includes requesting a dummy file upon the transfer of the file from the first client to the second client.
15. The licensing method of Claim 14, wherein step (2) further includes receiving the dummy file and requesting a license from the server upon the receipt of the dummy file.
16. The licensing method of Claim 1, wherein step (2) further includes receiving a license request from the first client.

17. The licensing method of Claim 16, wherein step (2) further includes transferring an empty license to the first client and, upon receipt of an empty license from the server, allowing an initial set of permissible actions with the electronic file.
18. The licensing method of Claim 17, wherein the initial set of permissible actions is more restrictive than the first set of licensed actions.
19. The licensing method of Claim 17, wherein step (2) further includes allowing an initial set of permissible actions regardless of a connection between the first client and the server.
20. The licensing method of Claim 16, wherein step (2) further includes transferring a modified license to the first client and, upon receipt of the modified license from the server, allowing a modified set of licensed actions with the electronic file.
21. The licensing method of Claim 20, wherein the modified set of licensed actions is more restrictive than the first set of licensed actions.
22. The licensing method of Claim 20, wherein step (2) further includes allowing a modified set of licensed actions regardless of a connection between the first client and the server.
23. The licensing method of Claim 1, further comprising the step of:
  - (3) receiving a license request from the second client and transferring a second license to the second client that allows a second set of licensed actions with the electronic file.
24. The licensing method of Claim 23, wherein step (3) further includes generating a second license based on an attribute of the second client.

25. The licensing method of Claim 23, wherein the second set of licensed actions is substantially similar to the first set of licensed actions.
26. A licensing method for an electronic file between a server, a first client, and a second client, comprising the steps of:
- (1) transferring a first license to the first client that allows a first set of licensed actions with the electronic file;
  - (2) upon a transfer of the file from the first client to the second client, modifying the first license; and
  - (3) transferring a second license to the second client that allows a second set of licensed actions with the electronic file.
27. The licensing method of Claim 26, further comprising the step of:
- (o) transferring the electronic file to the first client.
28. The licensing method of Claim 27, wherein the electronic file includes data selected from the group consisting of: document data, audio data, image data, and video data.
29. The licensing method of Claim 27, wherein the electronic file includes software selected from the group consisting of: application software and operating system software.
30. The licensing method of Claim 26, wherein step (1) further includes receiving a license request from the first client.
31. The licensing method of Claim 30, wherein step (1) further includes generating a first license based on an attribute of the first client.

32. The licensing method of Claim 31, wherein the attribute is a machine identification of the first client.
33. The licensing method of Claim 31, wherein the attribute is a user identification of the first client.
34. The licensing method of Claim 26, wherein step (2) further includes receiving a license request from the first client.
35. The licensing method of Claim 34, wherein step (2) further includes transferring an empty license to the first client.
36. The licensing method of Claim 34, wherein step (2) further includes transferring a modified license to the first client that replaces the first license and allows a modified set of licensed actions with the electronic file.
37. The licensing method of Claim 34, wherein the modified set of licensed actions is more restrictive than the first set of licensed actions.
38. The licensing method of Claim 26, wherein step (3) further includes receiving a license request from the second client.
39. The licensing method of Claim 38, wherein step (3) further includes generating a second license based on an attribute of the second client.
40. The licensing method of Claim 26, wherein the second set of licensed actions is substantially similar to the first set of licensed actions.

41. A licensing method for an electronic file between a server, a first client, and a second client, comprising the steps of:

(1) requesting a license from the server, receiving a first license from the server, and allowing a first set of licensed actions with the electronic file based on the first license; and

(2) upon the occurrence of an event, requesting a license from the server.

42. The licensing method of Claim 41, further comprising the step of:

(o) requesting the electronic file, receiving the electronic file, and allowing an initial set of permissible actions with the electronic file.

43. The licensing method of Claim 42, wherein the electronic file includes data selected from the group consisting of: document data, audio data, image data, and video data.

44. The licensing method of Claim 42, wherein the electronic file includes software selected from the group consisting of: application software and operating system software.

45. The licensing method of Claim 42, wherein step (o) further includes allowing the initial set of permissible actions with the electronic file regardless of a connection between the first client and the server.

46. The licensing method of Claim 45, wherein the first set of licensed actions is less restrictive than the initial set of permissible actions.

47. The licensing method of Claim 42, wherein step (1) further includes requesting a license from the server upon the receipt of the electronic file.

48. The licensing method of Claim 41, wherein step (1) further includes allowing a first set of licensed actions regardless of a connection between the first client and the server.

49. The licensing method of Claim 41, wherein the event is a transfer of the file from the first client to the second client.

50. The licensing method of Claim 49, wherein step (2) further includes requesting a dummy file upon the transfer of the file from the first client to the second client.

51. The licensing method of Claim 50, wherein step (2) further includes receiving the dummy file and requesting a license from the server upon the receipt of the dummy file.

52. The licensing method of Claim 41, wherein step (2) further includes receiving an empty license from the server and, based on the empty license, allowing an initial set of permissible actions with the electronic file.

53. The licensing method of Claim 52, wherein the initial set of permissible actions is more restrictive than the first set of licensed actions.

54. The licensing method of Claim 52, wherein step (2) further includes allowing an initial set of permissible actions regardless of a connection between the first client and the server.

55. The licensing method of 41, wherein step (2) further includes receiving a modified license from the server and, based on the modified license, allowing a modified set of licensed actions with the electronic file.

56. The licensing method of Claim 55, wherein the modified set of licensed actions is more restrictive than the first set of licensed actions.

57. The licensing method of Claim 55, wherein step (2) further includes allowing a modified set of licensed actions regardless of a connection between the first client and the server.